



Miller Highlights

Nov. 2010

Year in review

2010 may go down as one of the most variable years in history. We had bookends of beautiful farming weather in March through the 22nd of April and in September through the 22nd of October in much of Eastern Iowa. However, between these two timeframes we experienced many periods of excessive rainfall, some extreme storms, and a lot of challenges in getting adequate weed control and enough Nitrogen and soil oxygen to allow maximum yields and healthy root and stalk development. High temperatures in August prematurely shut down much of the corn and soybeans, as the small root system could not provide enough water to allow many plants to survive that stress. This was especially true for early planted corn that did not have foliar fungicide applied and where N was not adequate. Not only was yield compromised, but in many cases senescing plants were attacked by root rots and then stalk rots, as those plants had died before adequately feeding the roots and stalks. There were some localized high winds on September 1 and the 4th week of September that led to isolated fields becoming highly lodged, but most corn was quite harvestable. The heavy winds of October 25 through 27 were quite devastating to many hybrids, as by that time, corn was dried down to the teens and many stalks and roots were rotted and unable to handle sustained winds of 40 to 60 miles per hour. Late planted corn out-yielded early planted corn in many cases, because it handled the August weather better due to being younger physiologically. Defensive hybrids generally out-yielded offensive hybrids in 2010, as offensive hybrids were less able to handle the disease and consequently they were more likely to die early, especially without foliar fungicides and adequate N. In many cases, lower final densities (32,000) out-yielded higher densities (36,000) this year. As in 2008 and 2009, we again saw problems with either a single application of N and even N side-dressed in early June before excess water led to additional denitrification loss. These differences are magnified on corn-on-corn ground that could use better drainage and in compacted areas. Thankfully, the nice fall has allowed for deep tillage to alleviate compaction which accumulated over the past 3 years and for tiling of wet areas. Eastern Iowa was not alone when it came to lower than expected yields and so the good news is the low cost of drying and high price of the grain are two positives we will take from this year!

Maturity

We were about 300 heat units or more above normal this year in Eastern Iowa while the previous two years we were about that many heat units below normal. Using harvest moistures to understand maturity could be inaccurate this year, as they were confounded by premature death (die and dry) for earlier harvested corn. Also, once corn gets down between 12% and 16%, different hybrids tend to stabilize at different moistures in the field, irregardless of true maturity. It is important to keep in mind that of the last 4 years, we have had 2 years which favored early corn and 2 years which favored fuller season corn, so the best scenario is to plant a range of maturities each year and to be careful to overreact to a strange year like 2010.

What happened to the Yield?

We did not reach the yield forecast in August for Eastern Iowa due to lighter kernel weight (not test weight), as many plants died prematurely due to a combination of disease and excessive heat. Also, this year, corn kernels reached blacklayer with a shorter grain fill period than normal. In many fields, yield was limited due to less than optimum plant available N, low soil oxygen, lower light due to more cloudy days and leaf disease which reduced active leaf area during grain fill. Nutrient and water uptake was also inhibited by a small root system and root and stalk rots.

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Miller Research

Miller Hybrids research is conducted under tough conditions to allow the identification of hybrids that can tolerate the stresses that are typical in your fields. In 2010, we had 5 main research sites involving approximately 65 acres. Three of the five sites were corn-on-corn and we had soils ranging from sandy to tight black soil. Three sites were sprayed with fungicides. Our plan was to select elite hybrids and get to know them, so that when we recommend them for your farm, you will not experience negative surprises. This year we experienced more variability due to excessive water and variable available N (even though we side-dressed 4 of 5 sites (and part of the 5th). What we found interesting was that some of our key commercial hybrids and a select few new experimentals were able to do consistently better in poorer areas than most hybrids and so I feel we were able to good selection decisions for yield stability and agronomics.

Genetics and Traits

We focus on genetics first and traits second, as we are determined to provide you what you want for your farm. Miller Hybrids has an excellent set of stacked hybrids and refuge hybrids for those of you who choose a glyphosate option or for those who don't. We offer an industry leading set of hybrids for those who plan to use a conventional herbicide option or Liberty[®] or Ignite[®] herbicides. We focus on farm performance instead of plots, but again this year Miller Hybrids consistently had strong performance in the independent ISU Crop Performance Tests, where we won 3 individual trials and a SE Iowa District yield. M57-51BR was in the top 8 of all 4 district means in which it was tested. New hybrids M56-67BRG, RX626BRG, and M67-85BR all performed well. M67-85BR excelled with late N application while RX626BRG and M67-37BRG handled lower N conditions better than most. We will offer the new Agrisure Viptera traits in an introductory quantity of M67-37BRGV and a new 102 day hybrid M47-22BRGV.

Programs

Miller Hybrids has a number of programs which reward loyalty and growth with our current customers. We have an attractive prepay discount schedule with 9% prepay through November 30 and a 7% discount through January 8th. We will hold a seed day on November 30 from 11:00AM till 6:00PM at our new headquarters and anyone who attends and buys seed that day or has previously bought seed for 2011 can receive a ham or turkey or have one delivered later.

We appreciated the opportunity to meet many of you at the Farm Progress Show, the open house, or in your fields during harvest. We realize the importance of knowing your farming operation, so we can more accurately assist you with the right seed solution for your farm. If you or anyone you know is looking for an independent seed company, who truly wants to place your needs first, please give us a call. Chad and I would appreciate the opportunity to spend time learning about your farm and seed needs. Our goal is to understand your farm and help reduce your cost per bushel, by putting together the right hybrid and trait package for you. **Chad Gillam, V.P. of Sales (319-330-8021) and Bob Miller, President (319-325-6158)** are available anytime to answer questions and provide seed solutions. You can also visit us on the web at www.millerhybrids.com or reach the office at 866-WIN-CORN. Let Miller Hybrids be: **"Your Corn Innovators, Turning Potential into RealitySM!"**

P.S. If you have an email address and received a paper copy, kindly send a note to: bob.miller@millerhybrids.com and we will send future newsletters by email.